

2011

Allagash Wilderness Waterway Annual Report. 2011

Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands

Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry

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2011 ANNUAL REPORT

12 MRSA § 1891-B. Reporting

Public Law, Chapter 146 of the 123rd Legislature established reporting requirements for the Allagash Wilderness Waterway as follows:

The commissioner shall report on or before March 1st of each year to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over conservation matters regarding the state of the waterway, including its mission and goals, administration, education and interpretive programs, historic preservation efforts, visitor use and evaluation, ecological conditions and any natural character enhancements, general finances, income, expenditures and balance of the Allagash Wilderness Waterway Permanent Endowment Fund, the department's annual budget request for the waterway operation in the coming fiscal year and current challenges and prospects for the waterway.



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Policy

The AWW Act of 1966 contains the following statutory policy language:

§1871. Declaration of policy

Whereas the preservation, protection and development of the natural scenic beauty and the unique character of our waterways, wildlife habitats and wilderness recreation resources for this generation and all succeeding generations; the prevention of erosion, droughts, freshets and the filling up of waters; and the promotion of peace, health, morals and general welfare of the public are the concern of the people of this State, the Legislature declares it to be in the public interest, for the public benefit and for the good order of the people of this State to establish an area known as the Allagash Wilderness Waterway.

Report from the AWW Advisory Council

The Allagash Wilderness Waterway Advisory Council met formally two times in 2011 in sessions that were open to the public and included opportunities for public comment (February 11 and November 29). In addition Council members participated in meetings of the AWW Management Plan Advisory Committee, and the current and former Chairs of the Council, Don Hudson and Don Nicoll met six times in the process of establishing the Allagash Wilderness Waterway Foundation, as described in the legislation that established the AWW Advisory Council.

The major work of the AWW Advisory Council in 2011 was its participation in the management planning process for the Waterway. It was precisely this management planning process that had created so much difficulty between interested parties in the years leading up to the establishment of the Council. The Council completed the Strategic Plan for the Waterway in 2010, and the transition to the routine management planning process came off without a hitch in 2011. In addition, the Council set out to create the Allagash Wilderness Waterway Foundation, and achieved this goal by the end of 2011. The current Chair of the Council is guiding the process with the help of the Council's first Chair, Don Nicoll. As described in the Strategic Plan, the AWW Foundation will play a role in future funding of activities and projects within the Waterway, if it is successful in fund raising. By law and necessity, the AWW Foundation is an independent, private, not-for-profit corporation, which will work closely with the Department of Conservation and the Bureau of Parks and Lands and the general public to support the Waterway in the future.

The concerns raised by AWW Advisory Council in 2009 about the sale of the Lock Dam lot to a third party, including the concern raised for such ownership within the otherwise state-owned Restricted Zone, were resolved in 2010. The potential sale of the Lock Dam lot to the state, which was raised as a possibility in 2010, did not materialize in 2011. Though such a sale remains a long-term goal for the Waterway, it is not a pressing matter at the moment. It is, however, an example of how the AWW Foundation might actively support the goal to complete state ownership of the Restricted Zone in the future.

The AWW Advisory Council saluted out-going founding member, Dick Walthers at its meeting in November. Dick filled the role on the Council of someone with experience and knowledge of fisheries and fisheries management, and he contributed greatly to the development of the Strategic Plan in particular. Rick Denico, who brings life long knowledge and experience of the Allagash River and the lakes that make up the Waterway, replaced Dick and was welcomed to his first meeting in November.

Respectfully submitted,

W. Donald Hudson, Chair

On behalf of AWW Advisory Council Members Don Cyr, Rick Denico (as of 10/2011), Anthony Hourihan, Jamie Fosburgh (National Park Service), Janet McMahon, Don Nicoll and Dick Walthers (1/2011 to 10/2011).

Allagash Wilderness Waterway Management Plan Update on 2011 Progress

Following completion of the *Allagash Wilderness Waterway Strategic Plan* by the AWW Advisory Council, Bureau staff began in full a process of updating the Waterway management plan. On March 11, 2011, the first meeting of the management plan's Advisory Committee – separate from the Advisory Council – was held in Ashland. This initial meeting identified major themes, issues, and questions to be addressed in the planning process. Based on the feedback of this meeting, a process was defined in which the Bureau would draft a revised plan for the Advisory Committee to review and discuss prior to a series of broadly advertised public meetings and a comment period during which public input can be received. Bureau staff primarily consisting of the Bureau Director, Director of Operations and Maintenance, AWW Superintendent, and plan coordinator met regularly to craft the draft plan.

On October 13, 2011, the Advisory Committee met again to discuss the plan. At this meeting, the Committee reviewed and discussed the proposed revisions and additions to the policy section of the plan. At the time of this writing, in February 2012, a full draft of the revised management plan is very near completion and is slated for review by the Commissioner of the Department of Conservation and one more review meeting with the Advisory Committee.

In the first half of 2012, the draft management plan will be made publicly available and a number of public meetings detailing the draft plan's content will be held in several regions of the state, including northern Maine in the region of the Waterway. A comment period will be established along with the meetings. The intent is to establish ample opportunities for the public to comment on the draft plan. Following public meetings and the public comment period, the Bureau will make any changes deemed necessary before seeking plan adoption through the Commissioner of the Department of Conservation.

Ecological Studies

The United States Environmental Protection Agency conducted water quality and biological sampling of the Allagash River just upstream from Henderson Brook Bridge in 2009. The sampling effort is part of a national study to report to congress on the conditions of rivers and streams throughout the United States. The study consisted of collecting water samples, conducting habitat assessment, and determining fish species and abundance. Five top predatory fish were retained for tissue analyses.

The full report will not be ready to present to congress until December 2012. Preliminary results show low levels of nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorus) compared to other sites sampled in Maine.

The whitefish study on Eagle and Clear Lakes has been completed by Dmitry Gorsky, PhD candidate, Department of Wildlife Ecology, University of Maine. The study documented the occurrence of vertical migration of whitefish in the water column during nighttime and occupying deeper waters during the day. Predation of whitefish by rainbow smelt was observed in a laboratory setting. The window for predation by smelt appears to be from 12mm to 43 mm. The impact smelt predation has on whitefish is dependent on whitefish growth rates, environmental conditions, and overlap of habitat. A copy of the thesis may be obtained from Matt LaRoche at: matt.laroche@maine.gov.

Forest Harvest notifications/applications:

In 2011 there were a total of 31 active forest harvest notifications (FONS) within the mile zone of the Allagash Wilderness Waterway (AWW).

Seven notifications were for harvests within a mapped visual area of the AWW. Four of the visual area applications proposed to exceed the standards because of dead or dying conditions in the harvest area. All visual area harvest applications were inspected prior to harvest activity by the AWW Superintendent, an experienced Bureau of Parks and Lands Forester, and appropriate



landowner representative. All visual area harvest applications were approved with conditions to minimize the visual impact of the harvest area, associated skid trails and log landings.

Five notifications were received for road construction within the mile zone that were not visible from the watercourse. These roads were all associated with timber harvests adjacent to the AWW.

There were two notifications for the application of herbicide for roadside brush control.

No applications were received for construction within the ¼ mile new construction zone.

AWW Budget

Current Maine law does not provide separate budgets for individual parks, regions, or the Allagash Wilderness Waterway. Instead, appropriations from the General Fund and other Revenue Sources are allocated internally by the Bureau to programs and geographic regions. In this planning effort, a separate allocation has been established for operating expenses within the AWW. This allocation does not consider Personal Services (salaries and benefits). In FY12 the allocated "all other" general fund budget was \$122,596.00. The allocation for the AWW Capital Improvement Account was \$58,487. The allotment shown below includes the work programs and adjustments made through financial orders.

Allotment Source	FY-12 Q1	FY-12 Q2	FY-12 Q3	FY-12 Q4	Total
General Fund (all other)	\$55,000	\$25,000	\$17,596	\$25,000	\$122,596
Dollar Account (capital repairs)	0	\$30,000	0	\$10,000	\$40,000
Dollar Account (Repairs and Maint.)	\$7,823	\$6,664	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$18,487
Total	\$62,823.00	\$61,664.00	\$19,596.00	\$37,000.00	\$181,083.00

Revenue

The Bureau of Parks and Lands collects fees for AWW camping use, relying mostly on a contract with North Maine Woods, Inc. for fee collection services. The table below shows a history of fees collected, based on fiscal year reporting (July 1 – June 30).

Fiscal Year	Revenues from Fees
2007	56,588.45
2008	75,014.81
2009	83,652.76
2010	\$104,875.81
2011	97,562.91

From revenues received from camping fees, Maine law requires that a portion of that amount be set aside in a non-lapsing account to be used for capital improvements in the AWW. The table below shows the calculated revenue to this special account.

Fiscal Year	Revenue to AWW Account
2007	20,094.21
2008	20,894.00
2009	53,683.00
2010*	\$103,103.50
2011	\$55,007.80

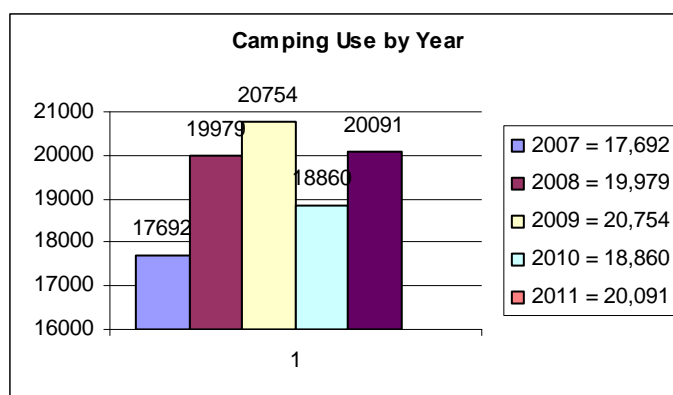
* The 2010 amount includes funds to correct for transfers that should have been made as a result of increased user fees for non-residents.

AWW Endowment Fund: \$193.00 is in the Allagash Wilderness Waterway endowment fund. This is an interest bearing trust account at the Department of Treasury

Recreation

Total public use of the AWW increased 17% in 2011. Day use increased by 35%, camping use increased by 6%, and sporting camp use increased by 5%. This increase in use can be attributed to having good water flows throughout the canoeing season. The higher than normal water helped keep water temperatures down and in turn improved the fishing as brook trout stayed active throughout most of the summer.

Year	Parties	Persons	Camping nights	Sporting Camp Days	Day Use	Total Visitor Days
2007	938	3,863	17,692	1,149	953	19,784
2008	1,140	4,469	19,979	2,223	648	22,850
2009	1,199	4,553	20,754	2,664	5,752	29,170
2010	1,145	4,267	18,860	3,507	6,297	28,664
2011	1,087	4,159	20,091	3,702	9,768	33,561



Oversize Group Permits

In 2011 there were 8 permits issued.

Year	Exempt Organizations	Permits Issued
2011	4	8
2010	4	6
2009	4	7
2008	4	6

	AWW Account (dedicated rev)	General Fund (gen opera- tions)	Donations Account (dedicated rev)	Poland Spring Account (dedicated rev)	TOTAL
Expenses - FY11					
Salary and Benefits		401,033.46			401,033.46
Professional Services		1,698.29			1,698.29
Medical Supplies					0.00
Water tests		850.00			850.00
Gas (for equipment)		20,996.31			20,996.31
Lodging, Meals, Mileage	8.00	740.24			748.24
Telephone		1,618.55			1,618.55
Electric		292.41			292.41
Other utilities		16.85			16.85
Rent of Land		600.00			600.00
Rental of State Vehicle		36,166.71			36,166.71
Repair - Equipment	638.49	5,353.64			5,992.13
Repair - Boats		3,292.88			3,292.88
Repair - Roads and Grounds	3,934.79	2,400.74			6,335.53
Repair - Buildings	4,861.21	6,136.41			10,997.62
Repair - Misc.		412.13			412.13
Trash Removal		33.75			33.75
Snow plowing		81.37			81.37
General Operations		4,230.30			4,230.30
Non-Employee Settlement					0.00
Occupational Health/Rehab					0.00
Employee Training		1,044.78			1,044.78
Food		657.87			657.87
L.P. Gas		5,836.87			5,836.87
Fuel Oil		1,270.50			1,270.50
Firewood		760.09			760.09
Misc. Supplies & Minor Office Equip	39.68	13,860.61		270.17	14,170.46
Clothing		2,845.35			2,845.35
Pinter		99.98			99.98
Equipment (garage shop equip)	137.87	13,281.32		1,745.00	15,164.19
Grants to Public/Private Organiz.					0.00
Administrative Charges*	1,250.59	4.77		261.97	1,517.33
Material Purchases for Resale					0.00
CAP Equipment				11,584.65	11,584.65
CAP Buildings & Improvements	4,964.85				4,964.85
CAP Structures & Improvements	3,605.41				3,605.41
CAP Infrastructures & Improvements	4,417.83				4,417.83
TOTAL EXPENSES	23,858.72	525,616.18	0.00	13,861.79	563,336.69
CASH BALANCE IN AWW Capital ACCT AS OF 7/01/11		98,569.67			

Includes total of STA-CAP and DI-CAP on all expenditures and late fees.

Expenditures from the AWW Capital account included: Repairs at Camp Drake, tramway portage trail project (reimbursed by RTP), new out-houses, new picnic tables, new steel gates on Jaws Road and Camp Drake Road, Telos Dam gate replacement, propane upgrade at Umsaskis, Chamberlain Bridge shop roof replacement, septic system repair at Chamberlain

Education, Interpretation, and Historic Preservation

The AWW staff continues to support and promote the historical aspects of the Allagash Waterway by collecting, interpreting, and displaying artifacts found by themselves and park visitors. One of the wooden bateaux from the Churchill Depot History Center was sent to the Boat School – an affiliate of Husson University in Eastport for restoration. The restored bateau is now on display at the History Center.

Work continues on restoration of one of the former Henry Taylor Camps by volunteers Gary and Milford Pelletier and AWW staff.

A small library has been established at the Churchill Dam Ranger Station. AWW staff is encouraged to use the books, articles, maps, and photos in the library to further enhance their knowledge of the history of the waterway. Faye Hafford, author of several Allagash related books, donated many books from her private collection to our library.

Ranger Chris Silsbee conducted a seminar for two groups of fourth graders in Mars Hill. He talked about his work as a ranger, the history of the Allagash, and showed them some of the tools that we use in our work. The students enjoyed a nice power point presentation as well.

AWW Ranger Patrick Emery completed a stream flow study on Allagash Stream. This study will help us answer questions from the public concerning water levels in the stream.

Superintendent Matthew LaRoche attended a weekend long Cabin Fever Reliever show in Brewer. While at the show he gave a presentation on how to prepare for an Allagash canoe trip. AWW Ranger Chris Silsbee and Assistant Ranger Eric Ahlquist represented the AWW and Bureau of Parks and Lands at the "Big E" in Springfield Massachusetts this fall. They made thousands of contacts about the Allagash Wilderness Waterway.

Volunteers

During 2011, 56 individuals donated 522 hours to the Allagash Wilderness Waterway.

Volunteers helped waterway staff accomplish the following tasks during 2011:

- Picnic table construction
- Gate replacement at Telos Dam
- Tramway portage trail improvements
- Boundary line work
- Grounds maintenance
- Campsite maintenance
- Painting
- Portage service at Churchill
- Carpentry work

Staff training: The major training provided in 2011 was the Department of Conservation enforcement and compliance academy. This two week intensive law enforcement training was held in cooperation with the Maine Forest Service. Allagash Rangers Patrick Emery, Trevor O'Leary, and Jay Young completed the training.

Regular training was completed on the job and at staff meetings during the year. That training included:

- GPS training
- Harvest operations within AWW
- Accident scene management
- Boating safety
- Lake monitoring recertification

Incidents There were 12 recorded incidents in 2011. The most serious incident was a death by heart attack in Chase Rapids. Assistant Ranger Erik Ahlquist handled the situation very well and made all the right calls. Waterway staff responded to the following incidents in 2011:

- 1 - Sickness/evacuation
- 2 – attempt to locate/lost
- 3 – AWW rule violations
- 2 – Accident/injury/evacuation
- 1 – Death
- 1 – Assist IF&W
- 1 – Spot signal/dehydrated
- 1 – Public assistance

Current Publications: *(free, unless otherwise noted)*

- ***NORTHRUNNER*** documentary film (\$15.00)
- Allagash Wilderness Waterway brochure (informational brochure)
- Rules and Regulations for Recreational Use of the Allagash Wilderness Waterway
- AWW Special Fees, Tips for Visitors, and more (informational brochure)
- Temporary Canoe Storage on the Allagash Wilderness Waterway (brochure and tag)
- The Allagash Wilderness Waterway Souvenir Store (brochure)
- AWW Color map (souvenir brochure) (\$2.00)
- AWW Decal (\$2.00)

Allagash Wilderness Waterway Administration 2011

Maine Department of Conservation: William Beardsley, Commissioner
Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands: Willard Harris, Director
Thomas Morrison, Director of Operations
Matthew LaRoche, AWW Superintendent

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Superintendent's Report

The winter season started out with our winter campground registration at Chamberlain Bridge. We allotted all 48 available sites before January 1st. These winter visitors are mostly long-time users who enjoy ice fishing for native brook trout, togue, and whitefish. One of the highlights of the winter was the Polaris Pioneers 50th anniversary expedition into Nugent's Camps on Chamberlain Lake during February vacation week.

We had a normal spring runoff and filled our reservoirs behind Telos and Churchill Dams. The spring fishing was excellent for brook trout and togue. Nugent's Camps were very busy during May and June with fishing parties.

July was our busiest month for canoeists with nonresidents making up the majority of the use. These nonresidents spend a considerable amount of money on their Allagash adventures paying access fees, camping fees, and purchasing nonresident fishing licenses. Most of these out of state visitors employ a Maine Guide or outfitter, rent canoes, and make their stop at LL Bean on their way up to the waterway. In short, they spend a lot of money on an Allagash Wilderness Waterway canoe trip.

With the arrival of August came the rain that did not really letup until October. During the last week of August the river was so high that we recommended that canoeists takeout at Michaud Farm rather than go near Allagash Falls due to safety concerns. We had difficulty getting the water elevations down to the optimum levels for togue spawning as outlined in our dam management plans but we did it by dumping water at night and some dry weather at the beginning of October.

One of the major projects of the year was the improvement of the portage trail at the tramway. Waterway staff hauled 86 cubic yards of rock and gravel across the upper end of Chamberlain Lake with a small tracked vehicle during the winter. We teamed-up with Northern Forest Canoe Trail interns and volunteers to actually buildup the trail surface and install drainage on 1000+ feet of the portage route during the summer.

Rangers continue with the enhancement of the wilderness character of the waterway by removing unnecessary signs and replacing milled sign posts with natural cedar posts. Over 50 signs have been removed since 2009 with no complaints from our visitors.

We had 12 reportable incidents for the year one being the tragic death of a father canoeing the waterway with his adult son. The father had a heart attack while running Chase Rapids. The son told Assistant Ranger Erik Ahlquist that just before his father died he told him that, "he was having the time of his life".

Finally, I would like to thank the staff of the Allagash Wilderness Waterway for their professionalism and dedication to public service. As the late Tom Thornton said, "the waterway is in a good place right now". This could not happen without the high priority and support of Bureau of Parks and Lands staff in Augusta and Bangor.

Thank you to all the people who work behind the scenes to keep this beautiful waterway protected, clean and safe.



Respectfully submitted,
Matthew LaRoche
Superintendent
Allagash Wilderness Waterway

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